

# Department of Human Services

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## Social worker set to testify in trial

Immunity given in slaying case

June 8, 2007

BY RUBY L. BAILEY

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

A social worker who prosecutors say failed to report seeing bruises and black eyes on a 2-year-old foster child has been granted immunity in exchange for his testimony in the manslaughter trial of the boy's foster mother.

Karl Troy, who worked at the Lula Belle Stewart Center, is expected to testify Monday against Charlsie Adams-Rogers in Wayne County Circuit Court. Adams-Rogers, 60, is charged with involuntary manslaughter and child abuse for failing to protect Isaac Lethbridge and his 4-year-old sister. Isaac was killed in Adams-Rogers' Detroit home Aug. 16, 2006. Without the agreement, Troy could face criminal prosecution if he admitted wrongdoing on the stand. Wayne County Assistant Prosecutor Lisa Lindsey declined Thursday to say why the agreement was made. "Anyone who's being granted immunity must have something to hide," said Adams-Rogers' daughter, Dana Rogers. "Somebody is covering up something. How's the truth to be told if everyone is getting off? You're leaving my mother out there to hang by herself."

Isaac's father, Matthew Lethbridge, said he supports the prosecutor's office, though he found it frustrating that Troy "is refusing to testify without immunity due to his desire to not be accountable himself."

Some jurors cried Thursday when they heard testimony from a medical examiner that Isaac was beaten so severely that he bled internally. His collarbone was broken and he had second-degree burns on his chest and abdomen, possibly from an iron.

Adams-Rogers told the Free Press in January that Troy witnessed Isaac fall down a McDonald's slide on July 21, 2006, the day Troy supervised a visit among the boy, his sister and their parents. Adams-Rogers also was there. On Aug. 4, 2006, she told a doctor suspicious about Isaac's bruises that he hurt himself in July and that Troy saw it. Also on Aug. 4, Adams-Rogers took the boy to see Troy at the Lula Belle center's Detroit office.

A Free Press investigation published in January reported that the state Department of Human Services had no record that anyone from the center notified Child Protective Services, despite the fact that Troy noted in Isaac's file that the boy had black eyes and bruises on his forehead, cheeks and chin. A Lula Belle attorney maintained the agency did call CPS on Aug. 4.

The newspaper found that Troy also failed to check on Isaac's sister after Patricia Kennedy, their foster mother at the time, said in January she told him the girl's vaginal area was swollen.

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June 8, 2007

**Detroit**

## Photos detail abuse of dead boy

Trial of Detroit foster mom told scars and bruises indicate toddler suffered intense pain.

**Karen Bouffard / The Detroit News**

**DETROIT** -- An angelic face, adorned with long dark eyelashes and soft, brown curls, belied a body scarred with unspeakable violence. Photos projected for jurors Thursday in the involuntary manslaughter trial of the foster mother of 2-year-old Isaac Lethbridge showed an outline of a common household iron on the body of the 21-pound boy. The print of a human hand could be seen in circular bruises in his upper arm and his collarbone was freshly broken.

Some jurors were moved to tears by the photos of Isaac Lethbridge, who died from abuse Aug. 16. Prosecutors still don't know who inflicted the blows, but the woman responsible for his care -- Charlsie Adams-Rogers, 60, of Detroit -- faces 15 years in prison on allegations she didn't prevent the abuse.

Isaac suffered from multiple blunt force injuries and burns that would have caused excruciating pain, according to Thursday testimony from Boguslaw Pietak, a Wayne County assistant medical examiner who performed the autopsy.

"With these types of injuries, there would be a lot of distress in this child," Pietak told Assistant Prosecutor Lisa Lindsey when asked whether Isaac's injuries would have been apparent to his caregivers.

"There may have been a whole number of neuralgic symptoms associated with these injuries (including) an altered gait, sleepiness, lethargy, seizures or an immediate loss of consciousness."

Besides the other injuries, Isaac's buttocks bore an elongated black bruise that Pietak ruled came from blunt force trauma.

"It could be a stick, a metal rod," he said.

Adams-Rogers also faces charges of child abuse against both Isaac and his then 4-year-old sister, who also lived in the foster home. The trial will resume Monday in Wayne County Circuit Court.

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# Mother's murder trial could be this summer

By Matt Whetstone, Cadillac News

LAKE CITY — Amy Sue Musselman's mental state at the time she allegedly shot and killed her 7-year-old daughter will likely play a big role in her trial.

Missaukee County Prosecutor Bill Donnelly and defense attorney Bill Barnett had a pretrial conference Thursday in 28th Circuit Court to determine how much time is needed to prepare for trial. Musselman, who was not present, waived her arraignment on open murder and felony firearms charges.

"We'll set this matter for a jury trial in August," Judge David Hogg said.

In the meantime, attorneys have 45 days to file motions in the case.

Barnett indicated he plans to file several motions. During the hearing, he also said if the case goes to trial, Musselman's mental state will likely be his defense.

In an insanity defense, a jury has to decide if the defendant's mental condition prevents the person from understanding the difference between right and wrong or if the person can understand but can't control behavior.

Jurors have several options: guilty, not guilty or not guilty by reason of insanity. With the last verdict, the defendant would be evaluated and taken to a mental health facility. The person can be held until he or she is deemed fit to return to society.

The 32-year-old Musselman is charged with shooting her daughter, Alyssa Paige Musselman, on Sept. 13, 2006 at the family's home in Missaukee County's Lake Township.

Since then, Musselman spent months being evaluated to determine if she is competent enough to understand the charges and face trial. Barnett said documentation shows Musselman was mentally incapacitated at the time of the shooting.

Looking ahead to the trial, 39 witnesses are listed, including family members and police. Barnett told Hogg he plans to call several expert witnesses and Donnelly said he plans to call at least one.

Your local connection

Timeline for Musselman trial

On Thursday, attorneys developed a timeline for the murder trial of Amy Sue Musselman.

Attorneys have 45 days to file motions. The eight-day to two-week trial is scheduled to begin in August.

For now, the witness list has 39 names and attorneys have indicated they plan to call several expert witnesses to testify.

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## Man charged with rape of 4-year-old girl 14 years ago

Judge says he believes teen's testimony.

By Michael P. McConnell  
Daily Tribune Staff Writer

FERNDALE -- A Waterford Township man will stand trial on charges he raped a 4-year-old girl at his house almost 14 years ago when he lived in Ferndale with the girl's mother.

Dean L. Cassani, 42, was ordered to stand trial on five counts of first-degree criminal sexual assault following a preliminary examination in Ferndale 43rd District Court on Thursday.

The girl in the case, now 18, testified that she lived at Cassini's house in the fall of 1993 with her younger brother and sister while her mother was living with the suspect.

"He raped me," she testified. "It hurt a lot."

The teen said Cassani first sexually assaulted her while her mother was asleep. He took the girl to a room in the basement of his house and assaulted her, she said, and subsequent sexual assaults happened there over a period of about a month.

She also said Cassani threatened her to keep her quiet about the sexual assaults.

"He told me not to say anything to my mom or he would kill us both," she said.

Cassani's attorney, Frederick Neumark, unsuccessfully tried to have Judge Joseph Longo dismiss the case.

"This is a situation of supposedly recovered memory," said Neumark, adding that the girl recalled very few details of Cassani's house, clothing or even what she had been doing in the instances before she was allegedly sexually assaulted.

But Longo said the teen's testimony was sufficient to establish probable cause that the crimes had been committed.

"Quite frankly, in listening to (her) testimony, I believe her," Longo said.

The teen testified her parents were divorced and she lived at Cassini's house for about a month before returning to live with her father.

She said she told her father about what happened several months ago because it was bothering her. Police began their investigation in January.

"I was afraid to tell anyone," she said. "I didn't want to tell anyone, (but) I felt like I had to."

Before Thursday's preliminary examination got under way, Longo found Cassani competent to stand trial based on a psychiatric examination at the Ypsilanti forensic center.

Cassini is jailed in lieu of \$50,000 cash bond. He also is facing two counts of assault with a dangerous weapon in Warren stemming from an incident in March. He is also jailed on \$50,000 bond in that case.

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## Bullying in schools is all too common

Friday, June 08, 2007

That 15-year-old Brandon Gallentine was punched in the face and stomach at Napoleon High School is beyond dispute. That he went to the hospital and received four stitches, and that a schoolmate was punished, also appear to be true.

The reasons for the assault are less clear. Gallentine is gay, and he says "everybody knows" that's why he was assaulted. Others disagree. The mother of the student who was punished called it a "stupid fight." Gallentine says his sexual orientation leads schoolmates to bully him frequently. The high school principal takes issue with that contention.

A school awash in anti-gay bias? Hardly. Aside from the boy who threw the punches, there's no one who can pinpoint the reason for the May 8 fight. And without getting every student to talk candidly, no one can say what prejudices -- if any -- are in their minds.

What the incident does highlight, however, is that high school today is, in some ways, the same as always. It's a place of young lives brimming with potential and optimism. It's also a place where social pressures and hormones place a huge burden on teens to fit in with the crowd. If you're overweight, your grades stink, your hair is green or you're openly gay, be prepared to walk the gauntlet for being different. Many of us have been teased or mocked in high school for stuff that's far more mundane than being gay.

It's not for us to say whether Gallentine has been the victim of homophobia or the sort of behavior typical at most schools. It's hard to imagine, though, that he's merely a face in the crowd. He's gay, and that's enough to make him different. The way he has been treated obviously creates a personal viewpoint that colors how he sees what happens to him. A fight that others might chalk up to "kids being kids" becomes for him an example of anti-gay hostility.

Whether it is or not, it's the community's responsibility -- educators, parents and students -- to look honestly at the culture our children grow up in. Teasing might come with the territory with teens, but there's a problem when it turns into hostility. There's no need for new laws, but talking to our children about how they're treated and how they treat others would be a start. To help the conversation, read on below.

-- Jackson Citizen Patriot

Sunday: Part-time

lawmakers

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# MORNING SUN

## Judge to decide on prior Babb actions

By SUSAN FIELD  
Clare Managing Editor

An Isabella County judge is expected next week to rule whether accused murderer Thomas Babb's domestic violence convictions and other evidence can be used in his trial.

Chief Judge Paul Chamberlain said he will issue a written opinion by the end of next week after motions Thursday by Prosecutor Larry Burdick to admit "prior bad acts" and witness testimony that Babb, 37, threatened to kill Mary Lynn Babb prior to murder in January.

Burdick also asked the judge during a brief hearing Thursday to allow witnesses to testify that Mary Babb spoke of her estranged husband's threats against her.

Mary Babb, 30, a Morning Sun sales representative, died after being shot once in the chest at close range in the newspaper's parking lot Jan. 9. Several witnesses placed a shotgun-wielding Babb at the scene.

Police arrested Babb in the Evart area less than three hours after the murder; he was ordered on April 12 to stand trial after a preliminary hearing in Judge William Rush's Mt. Pleasant courtroom.

While defense attorney Jeffrey Clothier objected to Burdick's motions, he said that he believes most of what the prosecutor requested would be admissible under state law.

Clothier, however, asked the judge to postpone ruling on testimony from witnesses whom Mary Babb confided in until it can be determined what they will say.

Clothier also filed prior to the hearing on Thursday his intent to argue that Babb was insane at the time of the murder -- a move that Burdick said makes the prior bad acts and other evidence about Babb's alleged threats more relevant to the case.

"Events involving Mr. Babb and his wife become more relevant," Burdick said of the insanity defense.

Clothier told the judge that he plans to call several physicians at Babb's trial, scheduled to begin Oct. 8.

Because Clothier plans on those physicians conducting independent evaluations of Babb, the judge scheduled brief status conferences for Aug. 3 at 2:30 p.m. and Sept. 14 at 1 p.m. to allow for defense and prosecution updates on the case.



Clothier, of the Flint law firm Clothier, Vance and Latchana, plans to argue to the jury that Babb, of the Ewart and Gaylord areas, was "unable to appreciate the wrongfulness of his conduct based on a previous mental condition."

If a jury finds Babb insane, he would not go to prison but would be confined to a state mental facility -- to be determined by staff at the Center for Forensic Psychiatry in Ypsilanti -- Clothier said.

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[http://www.themorningsun.com/stories/060807/loc\\_babb.shtml](http://www.themorningsun.com/stories/060807/loc_babb.shtml)

## Ludington Daily News

Posted: 6-7-2007

### Man arrested after firing rifle at wife

JOE BOOMGAARD - DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

SHERIDAN TWP. — A 40-year-old Sheridan Township man is in custody today after troopers say he fired two shots at his wife during an argument at their Campbell Road residence around 6:20 p.m. Wednesday.

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The 46-year-old woman told police she and her husband got into an argument, and when she attempted to leave in her vehicle, the man shot at her with a rifle from the porch of the residence, according to a police report. The shots did not strike the vehicle or the woman. The woman called 911 from a relative's house, according to the report from the Michigan State Police Hart post.

The man is in Mason County Jail today pending arraignment on charges of felonious assault with a firearm and felon in possession of a firearm, according to Sgt. Troy Fellows, who added more charges are being considered. He is expected to be arraigned today in 79th District Court.

When troopers arrived on the scene, the man was barricaded in the residence, Fellows said. He surrendered without incident after 10 p.m., but officers were at the scene into the night to gather evidence.

The Hart troopers were assisted by troopers from the Manistee post and the state police's Emergency Support Team, and by the Mason-Oceana Sheriff's Emergency Response Team, including officers from Mason and Oceana County sheriff's departments and the Ludington Police Department. Life EMS also assisted at the scene.

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The sheriff's office activated its command bus, which provided support services at the scene.



## KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

### Twenty hired for Summer Migrant Program

Friday, June 08, 2007

**By Rod Smith**

**Special to the Gazette**

LAWRENCE -- The Van Buren Intermediate School District Board of Education has hired 20 people to work in its Summer Migrant Program.

The intent of the program is to provide education to the children of migrant-farm workers. Classes for students begin June 25 and end Aug. 9.

The summer school program is part of Project NOMAD, an acronym for Needs and Objectives for Migrant Advancement Development. That program is a teacher-exchange program among U.S. states.

Those hired are:

- Teachers: Victoria Aranda, Joan Frank, Jon Garcia, Katherine Markovich-Bush and Christopher Roberts.
- Teacher assistant: Ruben Dominguez.
- Teacher aides: Brenda Belmares, Fernando Belmares Jr., Phillip Cruz, Ashley Herron, Jesus Reyna and Pedro Villa.
- Bus driver: Pamela Eldred.
- Secondary Credit Home Outreach Migrant Education: Ruben Martinez.
- Payroll: Nicole Zinger.
- Custodians: Fernando Belmares and Tomasa Belmares.
- Statewide recruiters: Andrey Fuentes, Gilberto Guzman and Ismael Martinez.

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06/08/2007

## Videotape set to be released

BY PATRICK SULLIVAN

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BEULAH — Benzie County sheriff's officials will make public a videotaped interview from a probe into thefts at the county government center — unless a prosecutor or defense attorney takes legal action to stop them.

In a letter to Manistee County Prosecutor Ford Stone, Benzie Sheriff Robert Blank said he would turn over the interview of former maintenance supervisor Donald Zaleski today, unless he's blocked by Stone or defense attorney James Hunt.

The Record-Eagle and Benzie County resident Eric VanDussen sought the videotaped Zaleski interview through the state Freedom of Information Act.

Stone refused to release the interview and instructed the sheriff's department to withhold it, saying it could jeopardize the prosecution of Zaleski's alleged accomplice, Elaine Saffron, a state Department of Human Services worker accused of stealing a computer from the government center.

Stone has not said how the tape could interfere with Saffron's trial. He said Wednesday he had not yet decided to request a restraining order. He didn't return a message seeking comment Thursday. Stone was appointed after Benzie County Prosecutor Anthony Cicchelli declared a conflict of interest.

"We have reviewed that video interview and do not agree that releasing it would deprive her of a fair trial," Blank said in the letter to Stone, dated June 1.

Saffron, who is suspended from her job with pay, is charged with misdemeanor theft and is scheduled to go to trial July 19.

Zaleski, 55, former maintenance coordinator, was investigated for alleged theft from the

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- [Tan janitor keeps job](#) - April 1, 2007

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- [In Benzie County, employee perks go beyond the doughnuts](#) - April 16, 2007

county that stemmed from the janitors' shed at the government center, where police turned up an illegally hooked-up tanning bed, stacks of Playboy magazines, rolling papers and drug pipes that contained traces of marijuana and straws flecked with cocaine.

More serious charges had been expected for Zaleski, but he died in an alcohol-fueled December car crash before charges were filed.

Blank's letter is in contrast to previous instances in which the Record-Eagle or a citizen filed an appeal of a records request denial.

Previously, Blank rejected appeals from both VanDussen and the newspaper, leading to lawsuits, including one filed by the Record-Eagle that sought internal investigation records. In that case, the sheriff's department was ordered to turn over the documents and pay \$65,000 in legal fees for the newspaper.

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